

PRAY, PONDER, PREACH AND PRACTICE THE WORD OF GOD

Facilitated by Racine Dominican Preaching Committee October 2020

'Tis Harvest Time

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Yes, the crops are ready to come in...the grains, the corn, the luscious apples and much more. But the wise woman called Mother Church is looking for a different kind of harvest. Her liturgy is seeking signs of fruitfulness emerging from the Paschal Mystery working its way in our hearts throughout this “ordinary” time.

Interestingly, Catherine of Siena is told that God is not concerned about the fruit. The fruit is for our neighbors, she is told. What God wants is the blossom. Now that is something to ponder. We know that the blossom is the source of the fruit. Clever! What God is saying is that the whole thing is really a partner affair. We can do nothing without this intimate Mystery at work in our lives. Yet God wants us to get applause. We play our part is sharing the fruit of what God and we have brought about.



So the deeper point here is intimacy: God with us and we with God. This is the message the Word brings to humanity. It's all about restoring the intimacy broken by our stubborn will to go it alone. So be watchful in these readings. How are we fostering a new awareness of it's all about God and me? Then we will be delighted as we note the fruitfulness pointed out to us in these texts.

Your yoke is easy...
Your burden light.
But my problem is forgetting
That we are together
In this partnership thing.
It's all on my shoulders I think.
Wrong.
Your presence is my comfort and joy, my strength.
Together we can tackle the challenges of today and tomorrow.
Together we can be fruitful.
The distribution line is long and others are waiting.

Special thanks to S. Helen Harry for these reflections.

October 4 – Isaiah 5:1-7; Phillipians 4:6-9; Matthew 21:33-43

The first reading from Isaiah and the Gospel both talk about bearing good fruit that will last or the kingdom of God will be given to others. A few years back there was a young Hmong man with some developmental disabilities who lived across the street from me. He would call hello to me when I came home from work or come over to talk to me when I was outside. These were simple, ordinary gestures, but how much they meant to me. As I remember, they continue to bring a smile to my face and peace to my heart. Who has been a bearer of the kingdom of God for you?

October 11 – Isaiah 25:6-10a; Phillipians 4:12-14,19-20; Matthew 22:1-14

The readings for today all speak of being invited to partake of the banquet of God where we will receive all that is good. Did you catch that in the Gospel? The bad as well as the good were invited. It is easy to think of those I like being invited but not so easy when I think about those who are in a different political party or are in some other way different than me. St. Paul reminds us we don't come on our own but only through the grace of God that comes to us through Jesus. We are invited in this very moment in time to receive the blessings God wishes to bestow on us. How will we respond?

October 18 – Isaiah 45:1,4-6; Thessalonians 1:1-5b; Matthew 22:15-21

Like Cyrus in the first reading, God has grasped us by the hand, called us by name. Paul reminds us that this action of God is a permanent covenant. In the Gospel Jesus tells the Pharisees and us to give to God that which belongs to God – our very life that bears the seal of God's own life within us. It is important that in our own milieu we remain alert and spend time in prayer and reflection so that we give to God what truly belongs to God not to someone or something else.

October 25 – Exodus 22:20-26; Thessalonians 1:5c-10; Matthew 22:34-40

The first reading today tells of some of the practical ways to show love to one's neighbor. Paul tells the Thessalonians that they have been models for those in Macedonia and Achaia. As in all the Gospel readings this month the Pharisees try to entrap Jesus by asking which of the many commandments is the greatest. Jesus goes beyond just answering their question. He demonstrates the answer by not walking away in exasperation, but responding patiently that loving God above all is the first and greatest commandment and loving others as oneself is the second. As my sister has said to me "love is an action word." How do we demonstrate love in our lives?

